

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 230530Z JUN 75

FM AMCONSUL PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 615

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PP

SUBJ: EVENTS LEADING TO DECISION ON INDEPENDENCE

1. CHIEF MINISTER SOMARE GAVE THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE JUNE 18 VOTE TO SET THE INDEPENDENCE DATE TO A SMALL GROUP AT A RECEPTION JUNE 20.

2. HE DREAMED THE NIGHT BEFORE THE VOTE THAT HE WAS BACK IN HIS VILLAGE IN EAST SEPIK, IN HIS OWN CANOE, WHICH HE WAS PADDLING SWIFTLY AND EASILY THROUGH THE WATER. WHEN HE AWAKENED HE FELT A TREMENDOUS SENSE OF CONFIDENCE, AND BELIEVED THAT EVENTS WOULD GO AS SWIFTLY AND EASILY AS HIS CANOE HAD MOVED IN HIS DREAM.

3. HE CALLED THE CABINET TOGETHER IN THE MORNING, AND THEY GAVE HIM THE GREEN LIGHT TO PROPOSE SEPTEMBER 16 AS INDEPENDENCE DAY WHEN HE THOUGHT THE TIME WAS RIGHT. HE THEN CALLED IN TEI ABAL, THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION AND TOLD HIM HE WAS GOING TO PROPOSE A SEPTEMBER INDEPENDENCE DATE THAT AFTERNOON. ABAL SAID HE WOULD OPPOSE IT. SOMARE SAID NEVERTHELESS HE WOULD PROPOSE IT.

4. WHEN HE GOT UP TO SPEAK IN THE HOUSE THAT AFTERNOON,
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SOMARE SENSED THAT THE TIME HAD COME, HE SAID. AS HE

SPOKE, HE FELT A POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM THE BACKBENCHERS FROM THE EXPRESSIONS ON THEIR FACES. HE FELT THE TIDE WAS WITH HIM. HE NAMED SEPTEMBER 16 AS HIS CHOICE OF THE DAY. AFTER A SERIES OF PROCEDURAL VOTES, SEPTEMBER 16 WAS PROPOSED JUST BEFORE THE MANDATORY CLOSING HOUR, AND WON HANDSOMELY ON THE VOICES TWO MINUTES BEFORE THE SESSION ENDED.

COMMENT: THERE WERE AT LEAST TWO FACTORS IN THE SITUATION THAT SOMARE DID NOT MENTION. FIRST, FATHER MOMIS WAS ABSENT. HE WOULD HAVE BEEN A STRONG AND PERSUASIVE VOICE ARGUING AGAINST A QUICK DECISION HAD HE BEEN THERE. SECOND, THE WHITE ADVISORS TO THE UNITED PARTY WERE NOT IN THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY WHEN THE CRUCIAL VOTE WAS TAKEN. THEY HAVE BEEN UNDER ATTACK FROM DISSIDENT UP MEMBER ANTON PARAO, AND HAVE BEEN STAYING OUT OF SIGHT. CONSEQUENTLY, THEY WERE NOT AVAILABLE TO PASS NOTES TO THE FLOOR OR TO SIGNAL HOW TO VOTE TO THE LESS SOPHISTICATED UP MEMBERS WHO FIND IT DIFFICULT TO KEEP UP WITH A FAST MOVING SITUATION. HAD THE ADVISORS BEEN PRESENT, THEY WOULD HAVE EMPLOYED DELAYING TACTICS THAT COULD HAVE PUT THE VOTE OFF UNTIL THE FOLLOWING DAY WHEN MORE OPPOSITION MEMBERS COULD HAVE BEEN RALLIED. OLMSTED

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